



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**March 20, 2014**

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #14-0324/ Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority

For the purpose of renewing and continuing the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority; providing for a special effective date; and generally relating to the activities and authority of the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Martin French

**PETITIONERS:** Councilmember Clarke on behalf of the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority

#### **SITE/ GENERAL AREA**

The Charles Village Community Benefits District is generally bounded on the west by the Johns Hopkins University Homewood campus, Wyman Park Dell and Howard Street, on the north by 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, on the east by Greenmount Avenue (to 25<sup>th</sup> Street) and Guilford Avenue, and on the south by 20<sup>th</sup> Street. The one-hundred block area consists primarily of two- and three-story rowhouses. The area is mostly residential with three commercial areas: 25<sup>th</sup> and Charles Streets, Waverly Main Street along Greenmount Avenue, and the 3100 and 3200 blocks of Saint Paul Street. The District includes two Baltimore City Historic Landmark Structures, Lovely Lane Methodist Church and the Goucher House, and many Notable Structures of historic significance.

#### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

Continued operation of the Charles Village Community Benefits District is in conformance with Baltimore City's Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically:

- LIVE Goal 1, Objective 3: Maintain and create safe, clean, and healthy neighborhoods.
- LIVE Goal 2: Elevate the design and quality of the City's built environment.
- EARN Goal 1: Strengthen identified growth sectors.
- PLAY Goal 1: Enhance the enjoyment, appreciation, and stewardship of Baltimore's historical and cultural resources.

## **HISTORY**

- Ordinance #94-0414, approved July 6, 1994, established the Charles Village Community Benefits District.
- Ordinance #95-679, December, 1995, modified the requirements for the Board of Directors.
- Resolution #98-011, approved May 14, 1998, renewed the Charles Village Community Benefits District for four additional years through June 30, 2002.
- Resolution by the Mayor and City Council #02-28, approved June 10, 2002, renewed as an interim measure the Charles Village Community Benefits District for one additional year, through June 30, 2003.
- Ordinance #02-0349, approved June 10, 2002, conformed the list of entities represented on the Board of Directors of the Charles Village Benefits District and Management Authority to reflect recent organizational and name changes.
- Ordinance #03-574, approved June 23, 2003, renewed the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority through June 30, 2006.
- Ordinance #06-012, approved June 14, 2006, renewed the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority through June 30, 2010.
- Ordinance #10-22, approved June 17, 2010, renewed the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority through June 30, 2014.
- Ordinance #12-08, approved April 27, 2012, replaced representatives from the Waverly Merchants Association on the CVCBD Board of Directors with representatives from Waverly Main Street.
- Ordinance #12-16, approved June 18, 2012, clarified that the Councilmembers appointed to the CVCBD Board of Directors are voting members of the Board.

## **ANALYSIS**

City Council Bill #14-0324 would authorize the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority to renew and continue for an additional four years, until June 30, 2018.

The Charles Village Community Benefits District (CVCBD) is a one-hundred block area which receives privately-provided supplemental security services, along with promotional services. The CVCBD was authorized by ordinance and established by 67% of voters participating in a community-wide voter referendum in 1994. The goal of the CVCBD is to make neighborhoods safer, stronger and better places to live, work and shop. The CVCBD includes and services several neighborhoods: Charles Village, Abell, Harwood, Old Goucher, and parts of Charles North and Remington.

Property owners in the benefits district pay a tax surcharge of twelve cents per \$100 of assessed value. This money has helped provide the CVCBD Management Authority an annual budget of roughly \$980,000 in revenue for the current fiscal year. Included in this

figure is over \$297,000 in grants and contributions and over \$684,000 derived from the surcharge. As property assessments have declined slightly over the past four years (in FY 2011 the surcharge yielded approximately \$695,000), reflecting the continued depression of real estate values that began in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, income from the surcharge is anticipated to remain flat or even decline slightly.

Over the past four years, since its previous renewal was approved, the CVCBD reinstated its Safety Advisory Council in late 2010 and began placing more of its resources into safety and security. The SAC is a vital part of the Benefits District's focused mission that contains three core services – sanitation, safety and promoting the District. Highlighting accomplishments of the past four years are the following:

- *Efficient services delivery* - In 2014, as in prior fiscal years, the CVCBD used over 93% of its income to deliver supplemental sanitation and safety services and conduct outreach, such as maintaining a web-site and providing weekly e-mail “blasts” to subscribers on such topics as crimes reported in the District and sanitation issues in the District.
- *Core Sanitation and Safety Services* – Every street is now swept weekly, and alleys are cleaned of bulk trash twice weekly. Temporary sanitation staff helps sweep streets and remove fall leaves. An average of over 4,600 bags of trash is removed monthly. The Trash Basket Initiative increased the number of baskets serviced daily from 75 to 85. Since 2008 a service agreement with CSX cleans, weeds and controls growth outside of their fenced line on 26<sup>th</sup> Street, between Howard Street and Loch Raven Road. Trash trucks have been purchased with donations from the Abell Foundation, JHU, Baltimore Community Foundation, Anderson Motors and residents. The Community Safety Programs Coordinator continues to develop the community-based safety program. A Citizens-on-Patrol program, established in 2008 in cooperation with the Northern District Police and four neighborhood associations, continues with training provided by the CVCBD. Citizens patrolling not only observe potential criminal activity, but also report locations of sanitation problems. In FY 2014, the budgeted amounts for sanitation and for safety were nearly equal, reflecting the positive impact of the CVCBD's September 2012 initiative to hire off-duty armed Police officers to patrol the District, with emphasis on crime “hot spots”. These officers averaged 300 hours of patrol monthly during 2013, and this level of service is expected to continue.
- *Communication and Outreach* – A weekly e-mail Crime Alert reaching 150 recipients was established in 2008. A monthly Crime Report reaching 550 recipients was created in 2009. Two newsletters are mailed out to property owners in Charles Village each year. An updated web-site and YouTube site continues to inform citizens and provide updates on services, events and meetings.

Based on the focused mission of the CVCBD – having the three core services of sanitation, safety and promoting the District - staff finds the CVCBD is fulfilling its goals and accomplishing its mission, and recommends approval of City Council Bill #14-0324.

Notification:

The Charles Village Civic Association, Charles Village Community Benefits District, Old Goucher Community Association, Peabody Heights Resident Homeowners Alliance, Harwood Community Association, Abell Improvement Association, Greater Homewood Community Corporation, Remington Neighborhood Alliance, Better Waverly Community Organization, Waverly Improvement Association, Oakenshawe Improvement Association, Charles North Community Association, North Charles Village Business Association, North Charles Village PUD Design Review Committee, Greenway Community Association, Tuscany-Canterbury Neighborhood Association, Barclay Leadership Council, Greater Remington Improvement Association, Waverly Main Street, and Councilmembers Clarke and Stokes have been notified of this action.



**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**